3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
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000
574 taravād. A woman might also visit for several weeks each year.
[593] Brother and younger sister, like a man and his sister's daughter, ob-
[604] served rules of partial avoidance—associated with incest prohibitions —during their periods of co-residence.

591 Sisters were always separated upon marriage, for the Nayars of
582 this area, unlike those to the south, forbade the marriage of two brothers to two sisters. They say that such marriages would endanger the unity of the brothers' taravād by introducing into it too strong a
613 contingent from another lineage (Gough, 1952). Sisters were together,
591 however, during childhood in their father's house, and were often
[593] reunited in old age when they went back to the taravād. Although they might seldom have stayed there during childhood and early
[763] youth, women seem usually to have died in their matrilineal ancestral homes. A woman was often widowed in old age. Alternatively
[586] she might elect to leave her husband and return to her taravād and
[764] sons when her period of childbearing was ended. In any case a woman's body had to be cremated and her funeral rites performed in the garden of her taravād house.

Women in avunculocal residence were partly maintained by their
[431] husbands' taravāds in return for domestic services. Nevertheless, important distributive ties persisted between them and their matrilineal kinsmen. Usually their kāranavan sent quantities of grain and clothing to them and their children twice annually after the harvests as part of their maintenance.

585 MARRIAGE

[582] Following the tāli rite, a girl entered into a marriage relationship (sambandham) with one man at about the age of eleven. The father's sister's son, if of suitable age, was considered the rightful claimant.
[686] If the girl did not marry him her kāranavan must pay a token fine to him at the marriage ceremony. The giving of the cloth by the husband which marked the start of a sambandham was carried out with ceremony in the girl's ancestral house and was the occasion for a large feast to relatives of both parties. After the marriage had been consummated in the girl's house the couple were ceremonially conducted to the bridegroom's taravād and the girl was formally received into it by her husband's mother and his kāranavan's wife.

[684] While a marriage endured the husband had exclusive rights in his
[848] wife's sexuality. If he detected her in adultery he might by custom kill her lover, cut off the hair of his wife, and send her home after divorce. A woman was not, however, excommunicated from caste

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AW11 Kerala AW11
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and her children were not illegitimate unless she had relations with a man of low caste.

A woman normally lived with her husband in his ancestral home or in a separate house on his ancestral land. He then owed her physical protection and at least a part of her food and clothing, in return for limited domestic services. Occasionally a man might choose to visit his wife in her ancestral home if she lived nearby. In this case he might work on her ancestral land or bring periodic provisions of grain and clothing to her and her children. He would eat sometimes in his ancestral house and sometimes in the house of his wife. In all marriages a husband was obliged to pay the full expenses of delivery when his wife bore a child in her ancestral home and, additionally, to supply grain and other food to her throughout the six months which she spent in her taravād at this time.

A woman owed respect and obedience to her husband. He had the right to scold or even to beat her if she disregarded his wishes. Polygyny was permitted and was fairly common among village headmen, chiefs, and royalty. The polygynous husband usually provided separate houses for his wives on his ancestral estate.

Theoretically, either party might divorce the other at will, but in fact it was usually the husband who initiated a divorce. We do not know how common divorce was in the traditional period. At present it is rare in wealthy landowning lineages, although it probably takes place rather more frequently than among aristocratic Mappillas of North Kerala. It is more usual among the poorer Nambiar commoners, although probably less frequent than among the poorer Tiyyars of this area.

Widows might remarry freely by traditional law. Today it is somewhat rare for a widow to remarry if she has children under the age of three or four; we do not know whether this was the case traditionally. A widow who does remarry almost invariably leaves her children by the first marriage behind in her taravād, in the care of her mother or some other older natal kinswomen. Such children may visit their mother in their stepfather's house but they have no customary rights of maintenance there, and it is considered that their own taravād is the correct place for them to live.

Thus in North Kerala, by contrast with Central Kerala, differences of paternity may create structural divisions among the children born of one mother. All are of the same taravād and share the same fundamental birth-status rights, but if their fathers were different they

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184 lives in the house with her husband. A point to be noted in this connection is that, when her husband dies, she must leave his house and return to her own at once, before his body is carried out. According to the Kêrala Mâhâtmyam the women in North Malabar (should) live with but one man at a time.

58 We still, after the manner of children, confound words with things, so it is not surprising that the unfortunate Commission arrived at the conclusion that the institution of marriage was and is entirely absent from the Marumakkattâyam system. "The parties do not plight troth, and do not call God to witness their union." And so forth. But with this conclusion, suitable enough to the high-flown moralist or to the restless beings who would regardlessly sweep away the long results of time and improve on the process of natural development, imposing fanciful arrangements of their own, the anthropologist cannot at all agree. The Sambandham, a regularly formed, and certainly not haphazard alliance between a man and a woman, having the full sanction of the community, is marriage in every sense of the word. If the tâli-tying ceremony gave the girl free liberty, we might well suspect that the Sambandham followed a ceremony, [848] not a marriage ceremony. But such is by no means the case, for, should the woman who is unmarried, for whom Sambandham has not been arranged, or whose husband, the man with whom she had had Sambandham, is dead—there is no such thing as widowhood,—bear a child, she is disgraced, much as is the Brâhman widow under the same circumstances.

581 What then is the meaning of the assertions of the
585 exponents of the orthodox view that the woman need not be chaste; and so on? The question is not an easy one to answer, but I think we may say with confidence that this orthodox view has been, in some measure, propounded by the Nambûtiris for their own gratification. [684] I have myself known several tragedies arising out of unfaithfulness, and I believe the old fashioned code of custom admitted the right of the husband to kill his wife's lover if he could, and also to kill his wife. No doubt in a great many cases the pair bound together in Sambandham lead lives ordinarily chaste. I do not, however, think that in actuality such is the rule with either party any more than it is in any other community, and sexual affairs are often treated lightly. With taste and consideration too, Hamilton, who arrived at Calicut in 1702, and spent some twenty odd years on the coast,

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
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This no doubt acted as a strong incentive for women not to create a situation which might lead to such unpleasantness, and contributed greatly in forcing the wife to conform to the rules of polyandry in what concerned her.

Were there any illegitimate children in the Thandan community, and what was their fate if there were? I was assured that they would be considered bastards and outcast. It was also said that the man responsible for them might be forced to support them on complaint of the woman to the Collector. This was the only information that I was able to elicit concerning such cases, Panju declining any knowledge of them. The interpreter made it clear, however, that he was only thinking of the case of an unmarried mother. Should she have a child in wedlock from someone other than her husbands, it would be very difficult to prove adultery and the child would certainly be considered legitimate and that of the husbands. It was up to them to decide what they would do with their unfaithful spouse, should they be able to prove her misconduct. Actually, there were no illegitimate children to speak of in the area, my interpreter assured me. An unmarried girl expecting a child would most certainly find a young man or young men to take her to wife, and apart from gossip, nothing serious would come of it. He knew of a few cases like this, he told me, but he preferred not to give me further details, nor let me see them. He had mentioned a woman who had complained to the authorities in such a case, since this had actually happened recently. It was, however, a modern development which did not conform to the traditional patterns of Kerala Thandan culture.

I enquired also about prostitution, and was told that this did exist to some extent in the Thandan caste and in other, higher castes. The last war, with its influx of soldiers from outside, was held responsible for this state of affairs, but also the presence of European planters and administrators. There was little venereal disease, although the authority upon which I was told this was not definitive. It did not seem to me very convincing, coming as it did just after the statement concerning the causes of prostitution in the State.

Birth control was not practised since it was contrary to Hindu religious convictions. Abortions were rare, and it could be seen that the population was increasing steadily and unchecked. There was no female infanticide, and both my informant and my interpreter seemed surprised that I should ask if there were. Women were highly valued in Kerala, they said, and there was no reason not to want them.

Feeling that I would obtain more detailed information concerning the